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# Trend of mild winters continues

25 September 2008

The Met Office forecast for the coming winter suggests it is, once again, likely to be milder than average. It is also likely that the coming winter will be drier than last year.

Seasonal forecasts from the Met Office are used by many agencies across government, private and third sectors to help their long-term planning.

Earlier this year, John Hirst, Chief Executive of the Met Office and Michael Lake CBE, Director General of Help the Aged, signed an agreement to explore ways in which the two organisations can actively use weather information to support the health and well-being of older people.

The forecast of another mild winter across the UK has been welcomed by Help the Aged, who work with other agencies to support older people.

Dr. James Goodwin, Head of Research at Help the Aged, said: "The onset of winter causes significant anxiety among many older people. This forecast will assist policy makers to adapt their strategies to ensure that the negative effects of winter weather are reduced as far as possible."

In contrast to last year's exceptionally mild winter, this year is likely to feel somewhat colder and although the forecast of a milder winter is good news, we should still be prepared for the risk of colder spells at times.

As Dr Tish Laing-Morton, Clinical Director at the Met Office, explains: "Sudden cold snaps, especially within a generally mild winter, can be a real problem for older people and others such as those with respiratory illnesses. This is why the Met Office has developed our Healthy Outlook service which helps people suffering with COPD successfully manage their condition".

Full Winter 2008/9 forecast

More about services for health

**Notes:**

- Our seasonal forecasts indicate how particular seasonal conditions may be more likely than others. The forecast is for the whole season and is not able to forecast specific details about any particular day or location within the season.
- Forecasting skill varies for different weather elements, and from season to season. The skill of our winter forecasts is greater than that of our summer forecast and the skill for temperature is higher than for rainfall.
- The 1971 to 2000 average winter temperature for the UK is 3.7 °C. The average winter precipitation for the UK is 332 mm.
- Winter 2007/8 saw an average UK mean temperature of 4.9 °C and average UK precipitation of 386 mm
- The winter is taken to be the complete months of December, January and February.
- The winter forecast will be updated monthly throughout the winter. Updates will be published at 10 a.m. on 29 October, 25 November, 22 December and 22 January 2009.
- The Met Office works closely with government departments such as the Department of Health supporting their Keep Warm Keep Well campaign.
- Met Office CE John Hirst and Michael Lake CBE, Director General of Help the Aged, have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding formalising existing links between the two organisations. The agreement outlines how respective expertise will be deployed to benefit both older people and providers of health and social care. It includes collaboration on a range of issues such as providing warnings of weather likely to exacerbate chronic illnesses as well as the effects of climate change on the older population.

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